

FOREIGN SERVICE DESPATCH

251

8 September 1952

PAKISTAN

Another invitation to the Soviet Embassy was received by the Ambassador, the Public Affairs Officer, the Cultural Officer, and the Labor Reporting Officer, and their wives. This was for cocktails on September 1. All attended. The party was given by Charge d'Affairs Dorofeev and Mrs. Dorofeev. About 100 guests attended, principally members of the Diplomatic Corps, but there were a dozen Pakistanis present, among them business people.

The Public Affairs Officer and the Cultural Officer each encountered unusual approaches from Officers of the Soviet Embassy. The statement of the latter follows:

The Cultural Affairs Officer reported that X. R. Trushcovsky (Information Officer) said he would like to attend some of the programs at the U. S. Information Center. Mr. Tate told him that he would always be welcome, but we did not ordinarily send out individual invitations. Mr. Tate's report continues!

Trushcovsky then said, "You are not a pure American -- are you?"

I replied, "I don't know what you mean. All people born in the United States are American citizens."

I reiterated, "Of course I am an American, but if you mean I am an American Negro, that is true -- that is what you meant, isn't it?"

He then said, "You don't look like Paul Robeson who is a Negro."

At that moment Mr. Y. Smirnov, an attache of their Embassy, came up and stood beside Trushcovsky. I immediately pointed to Smirnov and said that he didn't look like Smirnov but I presumed that they were both Russians. I then asked whether he knew Paul Robeson and he said no, but he had heard him sing. I told them both that I knew Robeson, in fact he lived in New Jersey just a few miles from my home during the time he was growing up and making a name for himself, and that I had graduated from the same University, Rutgers, that Robeson had. I asked them then if they had heard Marion Anderson, another great American Singer. Trushcovsky admitted he had heard some of her records. He then commented on the Negro spirituals and that they portrayed the suffering of the Negro people. I pointed out that spirituals

State Dept. declassification instructions on file

- 2 -

originated during the days of slavery which no longer exists in the United States. Then Trushcovsky said, "Your people are not treated the same as other Americans and are discriminated against." I said it is true that in some people their prejudices are directed against the Negro, but that it did not reflect the majority opinion or what is more important, the attitude of the United States government. I said both Mrs. Tate and I had had every opportunity to live as Americans, enjoying the advantages of education and gainful employment.

Toward the end of the party, the Public Affairs Officer fell into conversation with M. M. Volkov, Second Secretary, whose duties are believed to be roughly parallel to those of the United States PAO. Volkov apparently had been taking vodka and whiskey, and was quite voluble, along these lines:

"I met the brave American soldiers at the Elbe, and what a rejoicing there was. It was a great victory, and we traded bottles as we celebrated...But something happened. We are not close together any more and we should be...(In reply to some comment) you do not invite any of us but the Ambassador to your functions. We are diplomats and ought to try to understand our countries..." When I said that I would make certain that he was invited to our next party, he squeezed my arm and said he would come.

Talk shifted to motion pictures, and he mentioned "Meeting on the Elbe". He said, "I imagine you did not like that". I said I thought the picture was unfair to the American Army, and he took refuge in a statement such as the film was intended for commercial market rather than to record history. When I said goodbye, he urged again that we do more to reconcile the views of the peoples of our countries.

Ray E. Lee
PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICER